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May 25, 2018

The Honorable R. Alexander Acosta
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Acosta:

The opioid epidemic continues to affect an alarming number of people, and no community is immune from its harmful effects. In responding to this epidemic, we must do all we can to help the thousands of Americans suffering from substance use disorders (SUD) and their loved ones. Specially, we are interested in considering how best to harness existing nongovernmental and federal resources to help individuals, families, and communities respond to these challenges. In particular, the current workforce development system can play an important role in helping our nation recover from the opioid epidemic.

On November 8, 2017, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce held a hearing titled "Close to Home: How Opioids are Impacting Communities." During the hearing, Tim Robinson, Founder and CEO of Addiction Recovery Care in Kentucky, shared that "[w]orkforce development boards need to be as involved in this opioid issue as the healthcare side of this because treatment is essential. We can't get somebody back to work without treating them, but we also have to be able to give them an economic opportunity." Mr. Robinson is right. Having employment opportunities for those affected with SUD helps increase the probability that the treatment will be successful.

We have heard from many local workforce development boards who are uncertain about which of the services they may provide employers working with employees struggling with SUD. In order to effectively respond to our current epidemic, it is of utmost importance that community-based workforce development boards are able to effectively support individuals working to overcome addiction and employers working with individuals in recovery.

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To help clarify what services they can provide to people struggling with SUD, we respectfully request that you gather best practices to help inform the efforts of workforce development boards in these efforts. The collection and dissemination of these best practices will be an important tool as we consider how best to support the efforts being undertaken in local communities to address these challenges.

We look forward to working with you to help fight the opioid epidemic and strengthen our nation's workforce. If you have any questions, please contact James Redstone (james.redstone@mail.house.gov) with the Committee at (202)-225-6558.

Sincerely,



Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman



Brett Guthrie
Chairman
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Development